IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 8, 9, and 10 as follows.

1. (Previously Presented) A network switch comprising:

a plurality of input ports that receive data packets;

an external address resolution interface connected to at least one of said plurality of input ports, said external address resolution interface externally transmitting said data packets for processing, and receiving said data packets after processing, wherein said external address resolution interface is coupled to an external address resolution switch;

a memory management unit connected to said external interface; and

a plurality of output ports connected to said memory management unit.

2. (Previously Presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1 wherein said external address resolution interface comprises a high-speed external interface.

3. (Previously Presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1 wherein said external address resolution interface comprises an address resolution gigabit interface.

4. (Previously Presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1 further comprising:

an external ARL within the external address resolution switch which is connected to said external interface.

5. (Previously Presented) The network switch as recited in claim 1 wherein the address resolution switch includes an external address resolution chip connected to said external interface.

6. (Previously Presented) A method of processing a data packet in a network switch comprising the steps of:

receiving a data packet in an input port;

transmitting said data packet from said input port over an interface to an external switch for address resolution;

processing said packet in said external switch;

transmitting said packet from said external switch to said interface;

receiving said data packet in said interface from said external switch;

transmitting said data packet from said interface to a memory management unit; and

transmitting said data packet from said memory management unit to an output.

7. (Previously Presented) A network switch comprising:

an input port receiving means for receiving a data packet in an input port;

an input port transmitting means for transmitting said data packet from said input port over an interface to an external switch for address resolution;

a processing means for processing said packet in said external switch;

an external switch transmitting means for transmitting said packet from said external switch to said interface;

an interface receiving means for receiving said data packet in said interface from said external switch;

an interface transmitting means for transmitting said data packet from said interface to a memory management unit; and

a memory unit transmitting means for transmitting said data packet from said memory management unit to an output port.

8. (Currently Amended) The network switch of claim 1, further comprising:

a means to detect a connection with an external address resolution switch; and

an internal address resolution means to perform an address resolution function in absence of said external address resolution switch.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

detecting a connection to said external switch; and

performing an address resolution function in absence of said external switch.

10. (Currently Amended) The network switch of claim 7, further comprising: means for determining a connection to said external switch; and

an internal address resolution means for performing an address resolution function in absence of at least one of said external switch transmitting means, said interface receiving means, and said interface transmitting means.

11. (Previously Presented) The network switch as recited in claims 1, wherein said external address resolution switch is configured to perform an address resolution logic function.

12. (Previously Presented) The network switch as received in claim 1, wherein said external address resolution switch includes buffering means.